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North Vietnam - France: Hanoi's representatives in Paris seem cool to the recent French proposal for discussions on Indochina.

Politburo member Le Duc Tho, talking to newsmen yesterday before he departed for home, left the strong impression that Hanoi still insists on reaching a settlement involving US withdrawal from South Vietnam before it will enter broader Indochina discussions. He also seemed to be saying that Hanoi's response would be strongly influenced by France's attitude on Cambodia.

On 9 April the press spokesman for the North Vietnamese delegation refused to comment directly on the issue, but did state that "our people" believe "anything which furthers American aggression in no way contributes to peace for the peoples of Indochina."

Both Tho and the press representative made plain that their pronouncements are not to be taken as a flat rejection of the French suggestion. On balance, however, it seems certain that as Tho heads home, presumably to participate in discussions on this subject among others, the North Vietnamese are viewing the French initiative with a jaundiced eye.

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East Germany - West Germany: Pankow has been handed a ready-made excuse to call off the second German summit meeting scheduled for Kassel on 21 May.

East German Premier Willi Stoph "and associates" have been accused of murder and other capital crimes in a suit filed by Gerhard Frey, editor of the extreme rightist West German paper, the National Zeitung. Bonn's chief prosecutor has transferred the case to Kassel for an investigation into the charges.

East Berlin has recently intensified a campaign against Bonn's contention that West German laws apply to East German citizens. It has particularly focused on the so-called "handcuff law" of 1966 under which Bonn guaranteed safe passage, but not immunity from future prosecution, for East German representatives who were to come to the Federal Republic for a public debate with Social Democratic leaders. At the time Pankow used this law as a pretense to abort the debate.

In view of the strong desire of the Brandt government that the second meeting take place as scheduled, the case instituted by Frey--a professional right-winger and a veteran publicity seeker--is likely to be disposed of quickly. Under West German legal procedures, however, a public prosecutor is constrained to investigate all charges brought before him. In the meantime, West German spokesmen will probably try to reassure the East Germans of Bonn's good intentions.

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Latin America: There has been a general increase in security for foreign diplomats as the threat of additional kidnapings spreads.

Security has been improved even in countries where urban terrorist groups are relatively ineffective. There is fear, for example in Honduras, that even small urban groups are capable of abducting or killing a foreign representative or a government official.

Some concern is also evident over the possibility that the release of highly important prisoners can be secured by means of a kidnaping. As the threat of kidnapings by leftist groups spreads, government security services and rightists are considering counter-terror measures. In Guatemala, a leftist political leader was murdered in what was claimed to be "the first installment" of a right-wing campaign.

There reportedly is some support for Argentina's proposal that no OAS country grant political asylum to any terrorist. The Argentine foreign minister claims to have the backing of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Uruguay, whose President has stated that he would refuse to release prisoners in exchange for a diplomat, has instructed its embassies not to grant political asylum to any terrorist.

Some governments continue to maintain that they would take a firm position in the face of ransom demands. General Torrijos suggested that the Panamanian Government would be more likely to kill prisoners than release them.

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UN: Several delicate issues may be raised at the annual meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) beginning on 14 April in Bangkok.

An ECAFE report issued last week advocated a massive program of reconstruction and development throughout Asia, including the postwar rebuilding of Vietnam. The nature, focus, and financing of this program are sure to come under close scrutiny from most of the potential recipients, who will be striving for maximum shares. The conferees are also expected to give some attention to the Mekong River Project--the principal proposal for upgrading the economy of Southeast Asia--but will not make any decisions on it before the conflicts in the area are settled.

Debate is also likely on the role of the Western-supported Asian Development Bank and on the methods used to allocate aid to the less developed countries of Asia. In the field of technical assistance, a subject of primary interest to the Asian countries will be the creation of a "green revolution" to modernize their agricultural sectors.

In recent months the Soviets have been telling Asian leaders that they believe ECAFE should be strengthened. This line, however, may represent no more than a tactical departure from previous policy, prompted by Moscow's concern about the Communist Chinese role in Asia as well as its recognition of Asian desires for effective regional economic cooperation. The USSR probably still feels that Soviet interests can best be advanced through bilateral economic relations.

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NOTES

USSR-Peru: Moscow may assist Lima in building shipyards, primarily for the construction of fishing vessels.

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[REDACTED] The Soviet presence in Peru is now limited to the Russian Embassy. The Peruvians also have expressed an interest in obtaining Soviet assistance in mining and irrigation projects. Earlier offers by the USSR to expand and modernize fishing industries in other Latin American countries, including Chile, have not been accepted.

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East Germany - Algeria: Pankow is providing its first sizable aid to Algeria--a ten-year credit of \$14 million to construct a valve factory, which is expected to begin operation in 1973. Training for Algerian engineers and technicians is included in the credit. Additional aid could be forthcoming. East Germany has extended nearly \$160 million to several less developed countries in return for recognition. Last month in Algiers the East Germans presumably again discussed with Algerian representatives the issue of establishing diplomatic relations.

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